



**THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL**

**Encouraging Student Success at Carolina:
The Undergraduate Retention Study**

**A Report Presented to
The Enrollment Policy Advisory Committee**

**By
The Retention Task Force**

2010-2011

EXHIBIT A

UNC0124078

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III. Methodology of the Current Study

This study used a variety of quantitative and qualitative data sources and analytical methods. Whenever possible, the same sources, variables, and analyses conducted in the 2004 study were used again for the 2010 study in order to view Carolina's progress in over the last five years.

Comparative retention and graduation rates were obtained from reports published by the University of North Carolina System and the Association of American Universities Data Exchange. The latest available peer data for benchmarking six-year graduation rates were for the first-year cohort that enrolled in fall 2003. Those rates are presented as they were originally reported, and have not been adjusted based on additional information.

The majority of the analyses conducted for this study were based on a longitudinal dataset constructed to follow the undergraduate careers of the first-year cohorts who entered Carolina in the fall of 2002 (n=3,457) and 2003 (n=3,511). Enrollment data on the cohort members were collected for six years after the initial date of enrollment. In addition, a separate database was developed to track the progress and graduation outcomes of students who transferred to Carolina as sophomores or juniors.

The data gathered for the longitudinal analyses included demographic variables; admission application information; term-by-term records of enrollment, academic eligibility status, grades, and credit hours attempted and earned; financial aid eligibility and awards; and responses to first-year and senior-year surveys. These data were pulled from a number of separate information systems on campus, compiled, and analyzed by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

The opportunity to view individual student enrollment data across time provided some insights that were not possible with the annual fall snapshots taken for official retention and graduation reports required by the federal government. Due to a variety of circumstances, some students are awarded degrees retroactive to a prior year, and the graduation rates already publicly reported for that year cannot be adjusted. In addition, students accepted to professional degree programs (e.g., PharmD) as juniors or seniors were being counted as dropouts because their undergraduate enrollment did not result in a bachelor's degree. In the analysis of the 1997 and 1998 cohorts, retroactively awarded degrees were considered effective in the year the student actually completed requirements. The 1997 and 1998 cohort members who transferred to the School of Pharmacy and received the PharmD degrees at the end of what would have been their sixth year of college were treated as retained each term and counted as having finished a bachelor's degree within four years. For the 2010 study, this practice was continued for both the 1997/98 cohorts and the 2002/03 cohorts except that PharmD students were coded as having received their bachelor's degrees within five years instead of four. As a result of these adjustments, the graduation rates reported on the cohorts used in the longitudinal analyses may be 2-3 percentage points higher than existing official reports.

Data on subsequent enrollments at other institutions by students who left Carolina without graduating were obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse. With over 90% of all institutions in the United States supplying enrollment data to the Clearinghouse, the reliability of this system for determining if an individual student continued their education at another institution is very high. In the spring of 2010, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Key Finding Regarding Student Perceptions for Leaving Carolina

- About half of the respondents indicated that they decided to transfer to a different college because they wanted to: (1) pursue a major that was not offered by UNC, (2) were accepted by a higher ranked university, or (3) wanted to attend a university that was closer to home.
- Twenty-two out of the 51 students interviewed cited difficult transitions from their high school life at home to life at UNC-Chapel Hill as the main reason why they left UNC.
- Most of the students interviewed did not believe that UNC could have done anything to help them stay, as they left mostly because of personal reasons.
- The most frequent recommendation was to improve academic advising to provide timely individualized advising.
- Students from out-of-state recommended the university find ways to make them feel welcomed, comfortable, and adjust to life at UNC.

F. Factors Related to Retention and Graduation

The 2004 Retention Study explored the relationships between a number of demographic, socio-economic, academic, and personal characteristics that research has shown to be associated with first-year student success and graduation. One of the goals of the 2010 Retention Study was to re-examine those factors in relation to the educational outcomes of different subpopulations of students within the first-year class.

To simplify these comparisons, the four, five, and six year outcomes for the entering cohorts of 2002/2003 that were detailed in the previous section were collapsed into three categories much like those used in the 2004 analysis of the 1997/1998 cohorts. The five and six year graduation rates were combined in the tables that follow, but the details by year can be viewed in the appendix.

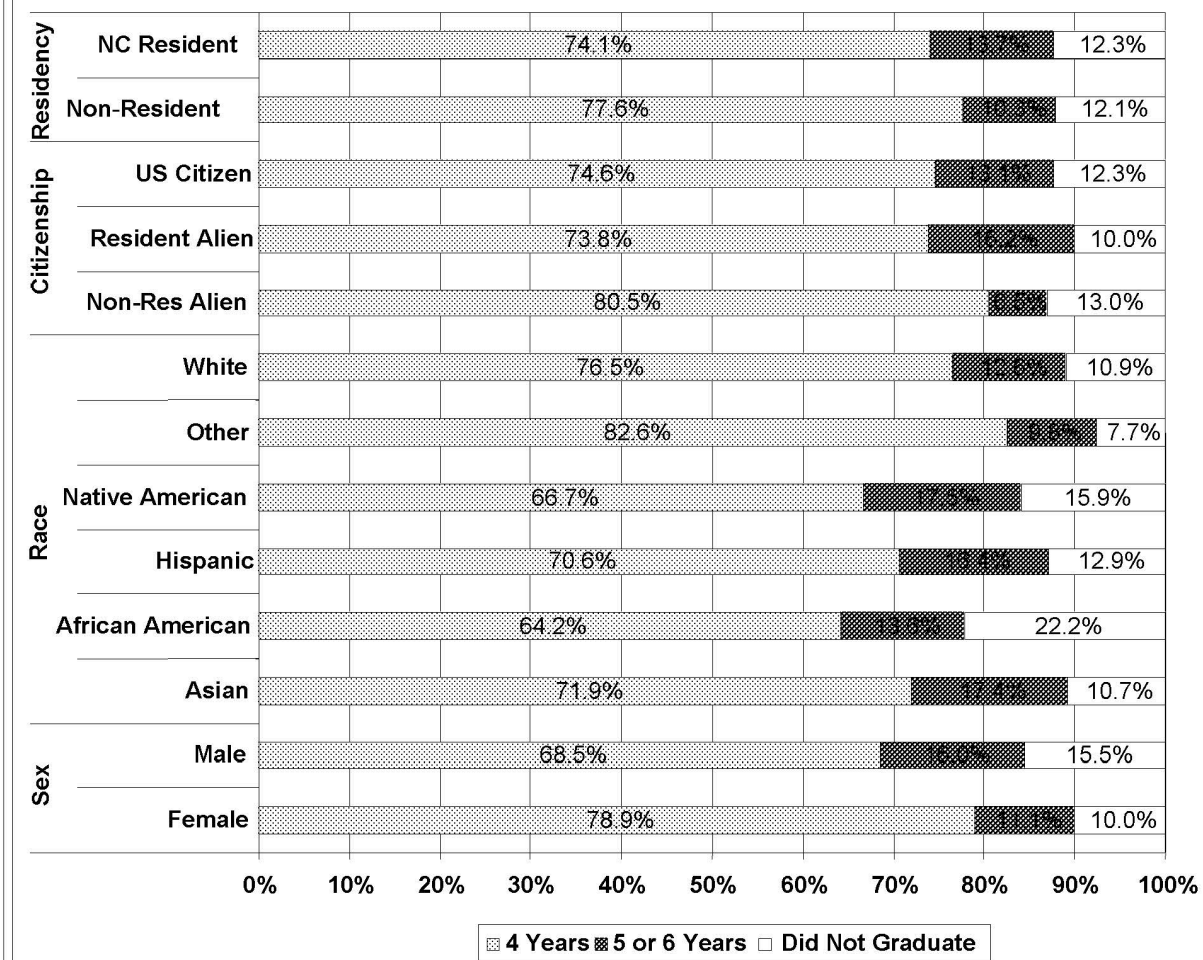
Outcome Variables for Analyses of 2002/2003 First-Year Cohorts				
		Status After:		
		4 Years	5 Years	6 Years
Graduated	Graduated from Carolina	74.7%	85.8%	87.8%
Transferred	Transferred to 4-year institution and received a bachelor's degree	5.0%	5.1%	5.1%
	Transferred to 4-year institution but did not receive bachelor's degree			
Other	Continued enrollment at Carolina	20.3%	9.2%	7.2%
	Dropped Out – Status Unknown			

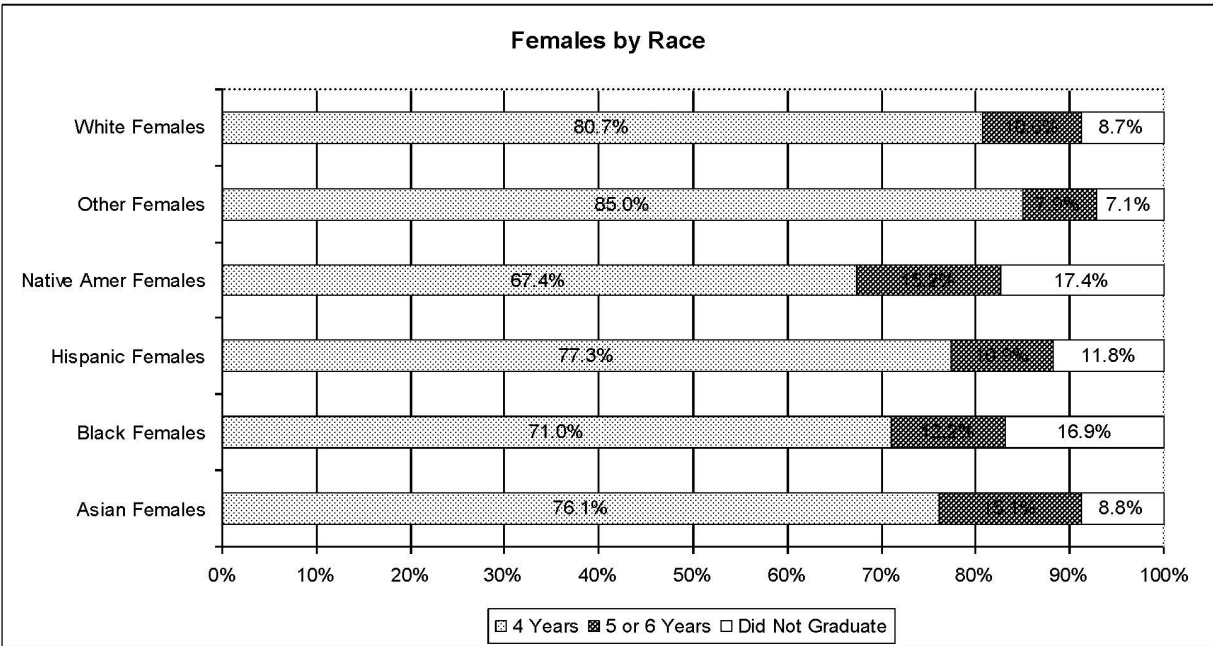
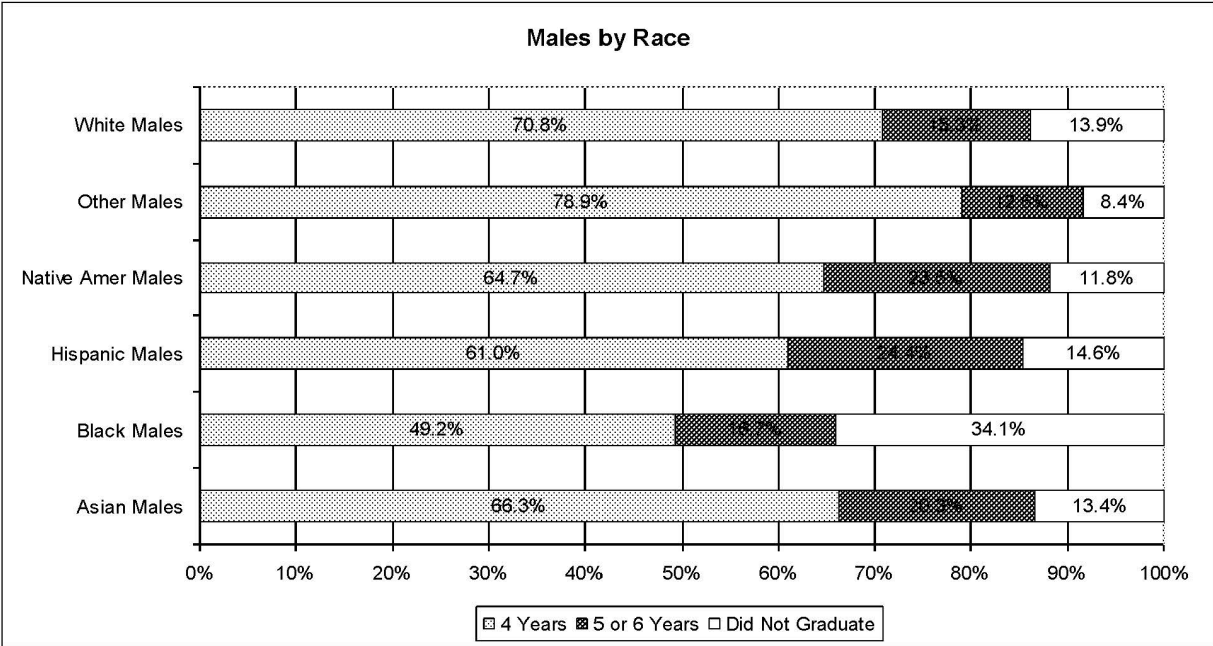
Demographic Characteristics

Significant differences were observed by race and sex in the proportions of students who graduated and those who did not. In particular, four-year graduation rates were lower for males and underrepresented minorities.

When six year graduation rates are compared, differences across groups are generally not as large. However, African American students are still twelve percentage points lower than White students.

Graduation Outcomes by Demographic Characteristics

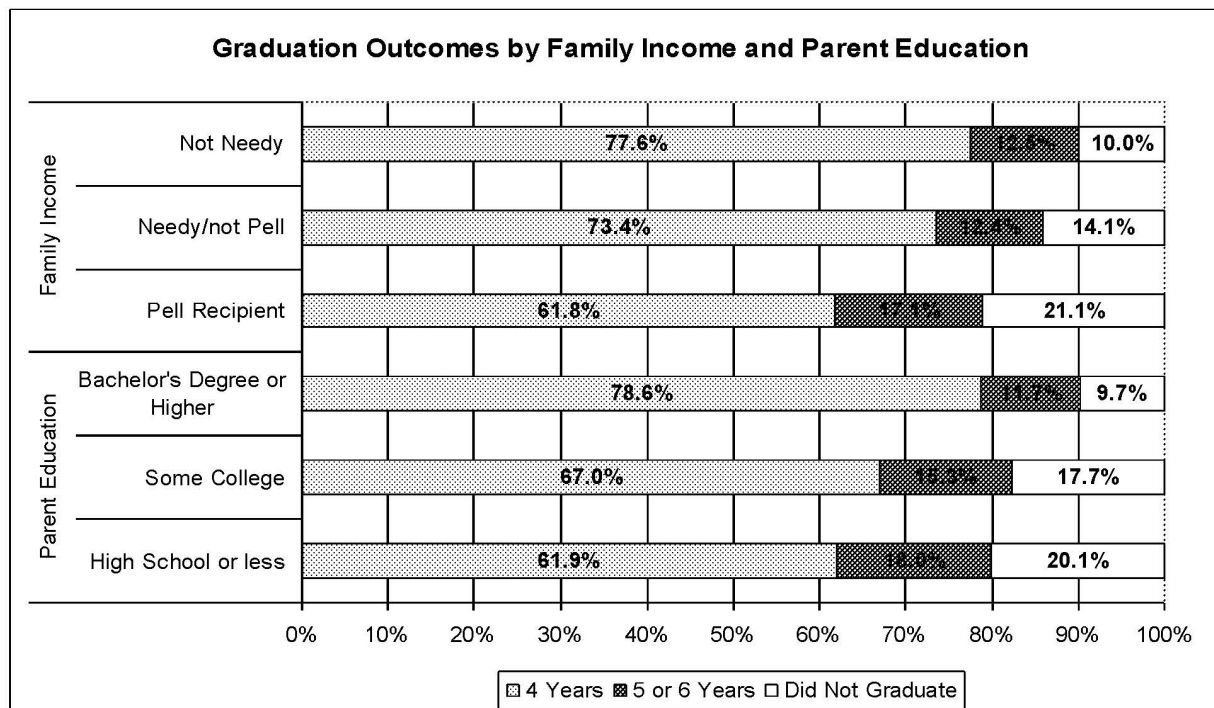




Year Six Outcomes				
		Graduated	Transferred	Neither
Sex	Female	90.0%	4.9%	5.1%
	Male	84.5%	5.2%	10.3%
Race	Asian	89.3%	4.1%	6.6%
	African Amer	77.8%	6.8%	15.4%
	Hispanic	87.1%	9.5%	3.5%
	Native American	84.1%	4.8%	11.1%
	Other	92.3%	3.4%	4.3%
	White	89.1%	4.8%	6.2%
Citizenship	Non-Res Alien	87.0%	3.9%	9.1%
	Resident Alien	90.0%	3.8%	6.2%
	US Citizen	87.7%	5.1%	7.2%
Residency Status at Time of Entry	Non-Resident	87.9%	7.5%	4.6%
	NC Resident	87.7%	4.5%	7.7%

Financial Resources

There were considerable differences in the graduation outcomes of students when compared by parent education and family income. This finding is consistent with the overwhelming majority of studies suggesting that low-income students do not persist and graduate at the same rates as other students. Four-year graduation rates for Pell recipients are over eleven percentage points lower than other needy students and sixteen percentage points lower than those with no need.



Year Six Outcomes				
		Graduated	Transferred	Neither
Parent Education	High School or less	79.9%	7.5%	12.6%
	Some College	82.3%	7.0%	10.8%
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	90.3%	4.3%	5.4%
Family Income	Pell Recipient	78.9%	6.4%	14.7%
	Needy/not Pell	85.9%	6.0%	8.1%
	Not Needy	90.0%	4.5%	5.4%

Academic Preparation Indicators

Graduation outcomes differed significantly by level of academic preparation at the time of entry to Carolina.

For the most part, Carolina graduates demonstrated a stronger academic background than those who transferred to another institution, and in turn, the transfers displayed stronger credentials than those who neither graduated nor transferred.

Graduation Outcomes and Academic Preparation				
	4 Years	5 or 6 Years	Did Not Graduate	Total
SAT Total Score	1286	1247	1238	1275
High School GPA	4.252	4.117	4.040	4.209
HS Rank Percentile	90th	87th	86th	89th
AP Credits Awarded	13.2	11.3	10.4	12.7
1 or More Credits	67.7%	52.3%	47.1%	65.0%
Transfer Credit Hours	2.6	2.8	2.0	2.6

Six Year Outcomes and Academic Preparation				
	Graduated	Transferred	Neither	Total
SAT Total Score	1280	1241	1236	1275
High School GPA	4.232	4.113	3.991	4.209
HS Rank Percentile	90th	87th	85th	89th
AP Credits Awarded	13.2	11.3	10.4	12.7
1 or More Credits	66.1%	50.0%	45.1%	65.0%
Transfer Credit Hours	2.7	1.7	2.1	2.6

Academic and Social Integration at Carolina

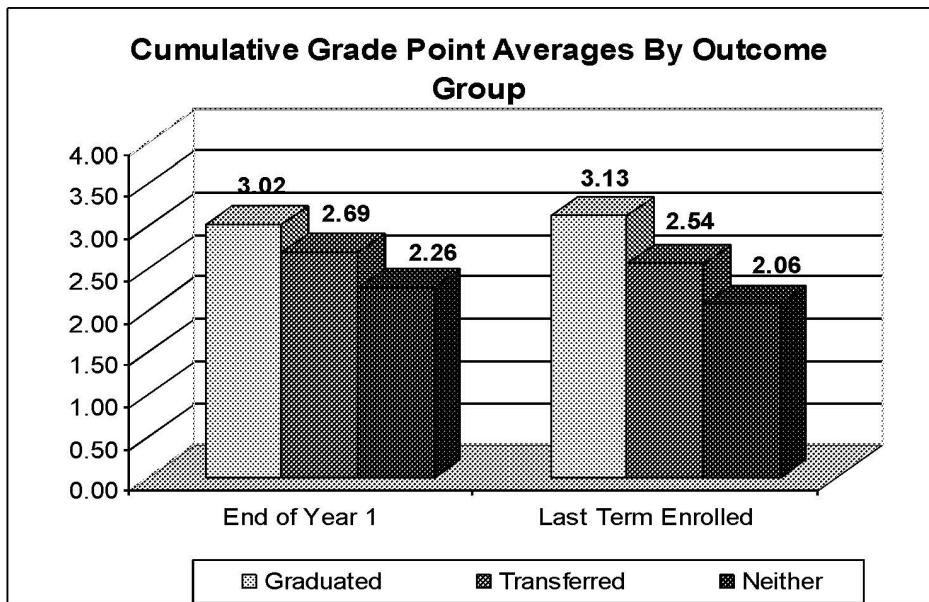
In the five years since the 2004 Retention Study, a few more sources of data on social integration became available for use in this analysis of the 2002/2003 cohorts. However, most of the data on how students become integrated into the social life of the campus still comes from student surveys and other self-reported information. The variables in the tables below were derived from the central student information system and first-year student responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Because it was not possible to validate this information through other sources, these variables should be considered at best indirect measures of student connections to the academic and social life of the campus.

Outcomes By Academic and Social Integration Indicators				
		Graduated	Transferred	Neither
Carolina Was 1 st Choice	Yes	85.5%	5.5%	9.1%
	No	83.3%	5.4%	11.3%
Fraternity/Sorority Member	Yes	91.9%	2.0%	6.1%
	No	81.3%	6.9%	11.8%
Athlete	Yes	73.5%	11.0%	15.5%
	No	84.4%	5.5%	10.2%

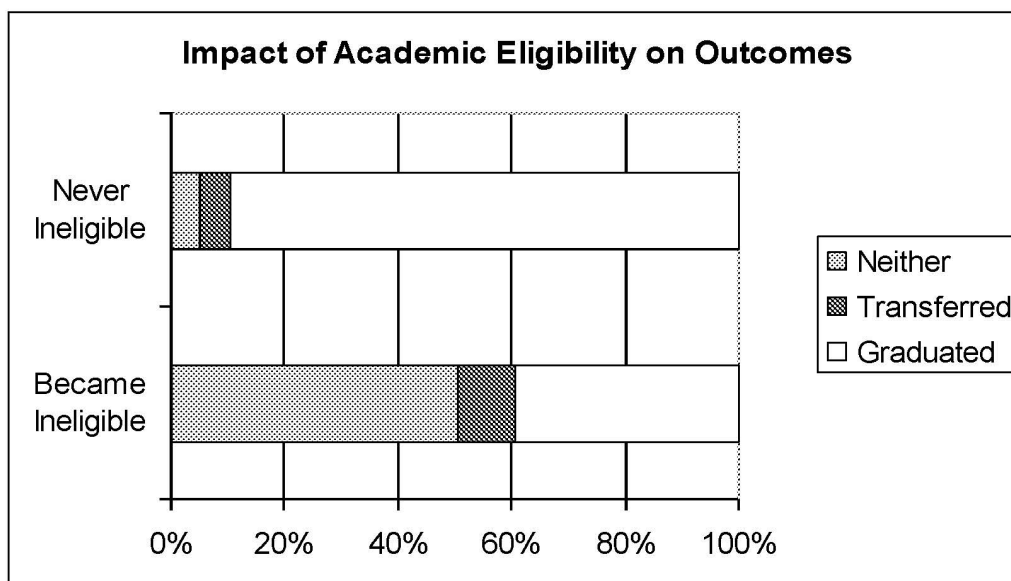
Academic Performance

Academic performance, as measured by cumulative grade point average, has a strong relationship to retention and graduation outcomes. As shown in the following graphs, significant differences were found across outcome groups on cumulative grade point average at the end of year one and at the end of the last semester enrolled. Students who graduated had higher grade point averages at each point than those who transferred, who in turn had higher grade point averages than those who had neither transferred nor graduated at the end of five years. It is also notable that the average grades of those who graduated increased slightly between the end of year one and the last term enrolled, while the grades of the other two groups dropped. The relationship between grades and retention can also be viewed in terms of grade point average intervals and years to degree.

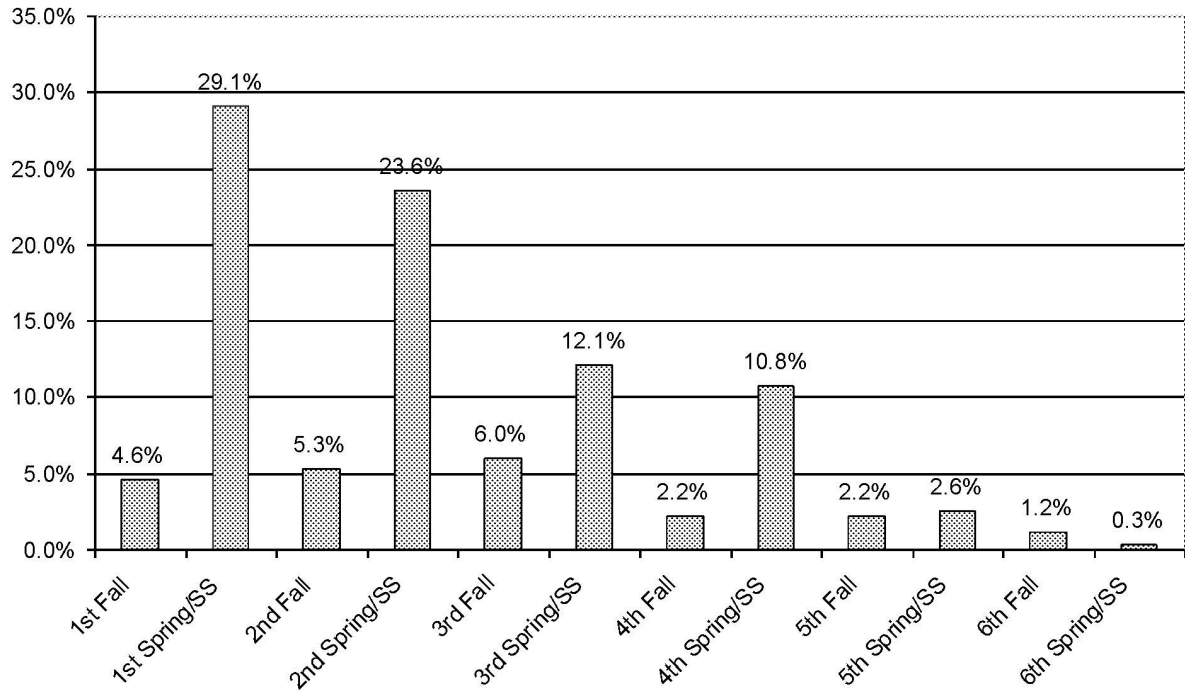
Approximately 8.5% of all students in the 2002/2003 cohorts became academically ineligible at least once during their enrollment at Carolina, which is considerably less than the 11.8% reported for the 1997/1998 cohorts. The graph below indicates that students are more likely to become ineligible at the end of the first-year than at any other time, followed closely by the end of the second year. However, the impact of this event on graduation outcomes is almost the same. Of those who became academically ineligible even once, less than 40% graduated within six years. A number of students become ineligible more than one, increasing their risk of not graduating with each occurrence.



Graduation Outcomes and First-year GPA			
	4 Years	5-6 Years	Did Not Graduate
< 1.500	13.2%	11.8%	75.0%
1.500 – 1.999	30.7%	24.0%	45.3%
2.000 – 2.499	55.2%	20.0%	24.6%
2.500 +	82.1%	11.7%	6.1%



Term in Which Students First Became Academically Ineligible (N=603)



Number of Ineligible Terms 2002/2003 First-Year Students		
Times Became Ineligible	N	%
None	6,378	91.5%
1 Time	260	3.7%
2 Times	107	1.5%
3 or More Times	223	3.2%
Total	6,968	100.0%

Key Findings Regarding Factors Related to Retention and Graduation

- Progress has been made regarding the success of first generation college students. In the 2004 study, 75% graduated within 5 years. In the current study, 79% of first generation students have been found to graduate within 5 years.
- Approximately 8.5% of all students in the 2002/2003 cohorts became academically ineligible at least once during their enrollment at Carolina, which is considerably less than the 11.8% reported for the 1997/1998 cohorts.
- Low-income students do not persist and graduate at the same rates as other students. Four-year graduation rates for Pell recipients are over eleven percentage points lower than other needy students and sixteen percentage points lower than those with no need.
- Four-year graduation rates are lower for males and underrepresented minorities.
- Academic performance, as measured by cumulative grade point average, has a strong relationship to retention and graduation outcomes.
- Students are more likely to become ineligible at the end of the first year than at any other time, followed closely by the end of the second year.
- Of those who became academically ineligible even once, less than 40% graduated within six years.

G. Evaluation of the Probation Semester

One of the most extensive efforts to improve retention and graduation rates that emerged from the results of the 2004 study was a major revision of Carolina's undergraduate academic eligibility requirements. With the new eligibility standards implemented in 2007, a system of academic probation and intervention was created. The goal of the intervention is to help students return to good standing within one semester. This section describes the students on academic probation and then evaluates some aspects of the intervention system. At the time of this study, the academic probation program has existed for 5 semesters and as such the results should be considered preliminary.

Characteristics of Students on Academic Probation

Thus far, the majority of students have served their probation semester in the spring of their first-year at Carolina.

2009 Cohort: 123 (3.1%) on PR after 1 st semester
2008 Cohort: 143 (3.69%) on PR after 1 st semester
2007 Cohort: 159 (4%) on PR after 1 st semester

On average, 3.63% of first-years have ended up on probation after their first semester.

Starting in 2009, sophomore and junior transfers could be on academic probation. In 2009-2010, approximately 6.5% of all new transfer students ended up on academic probation after their first semester.

In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, students who have been on probation are more likely to have the following characteristics compared to their counterparts who have not been on probation: male, Black, first generation, and low-income. Transfer students on probation have higher percentages of Asian and foreign students, and have attended a two-year institution instead of a four-year institution prior to coming to Carolina.

Significant differences can be observed between probation and non-probation students in both the first-year and transfer student populations. SAT total scores are nearly 100 points lower for the probation students, who also came to Carolina with substantially fewer AP and transfer credits than the students who did not go on probation. High school GPA and class rank are also considerably lower for probation students. The differences in these entering characteristics are mirrored in the large disparity between cumulative GPA at Carolina at the time of the probation period.

Characteristics of Probation Students							
		Not on Probation		Probation		All Students	
		First-year	Transfer	First-year	Transfer	First-year	Transfer
Sex	Female	60.1%	55.5%	48.8%	54.4%	59.6%	55.4%
	Male	39.9%	44.5%	51.2%	45.6%	40.4%	44.6%
Race	Asian	8.8%	10.2%	4.2%	14.4%	8.6%	10.4%
	Black	9.9%	6.3%	34.2%	12.2%	11.0%	6.5%
	Hispanic	5.6%	5.4%	8.0%	6.7%	5.7%	5.4%
	Native Amer	0.9%	0.5%	2.5%	1.1%	1.0%	0.5%
	Other	5.1%	7.5%	3.7%	5.6%	5.1%	7.4%
	White	69.7%	70.2%	47.4%	60.0%	68.7%	69.8%
Foreign	Non-Res Alien	1.5%	4.9%	0.5%	12.2%	1.4%	5.2%
	Resident Alien	2.9%	5.5%	1.2%	7.8%	2.8%	5.5%
	US Citizen	95.7%	89.7%	98.2%	80.0%	95.8%	89.3%
Residency Status at Time of Entry	Non-Resident	17.8%	28.1%	14.2%	30.0%	17.6%	28.2%
	Resident	82.2%	71.9%	85.8%	70.0%	82.4%	71.8%
Transfer Institution Type	2 Year	0.0%	35.8%	0.0%	52.2%	0.0%	36.5%
	4 Year	0.0%	64.2%	0.0%	47.8%	0.0%	63.5%
Associate Degree	No	100.0%	83.2%	100.0%	78.9%	100.0%	83.1%
	Yes	0.0%	16.8%	0.0%	21.1%	0.0%	16.9%
Parent Education	HS or less	4.3%	9.8%	10.4%	13.3%	4.6%	10.0%
	Some College	12.2%	19.5%	26.6%	22.9%	12.8%	19.6%
	College Grads	83.5%	70.7%	63.0%	63.9%	82.5%	70.4%
Financial Status	Covenant	9.1%	9.1%	18.9%	13.3%	9.5%	9.3%
	Other Needy	24.5%	36.9%	33.8%	44.4%	25.0%	37.2%
	Not Needy	66.4%	54.0%	47.3%	42.2%	65.5%	53.5%

Academic Characteristics of Probation Students (Means)						
	Not on Probation		Probation		All Students	
	First-year	Transfer	First-year	Transfer	First-year	Transfer
SAT Total Score	1306	1202	1206	1114	1302	1199
AP Credits Awarded	11	2	4	1	11	2
Transfer Credit Hours	1.21	36.80	1.41	20.42	1.22	36.16
High School GPA	4.46	3.82	4.15	3.51	4.44	3.81
High School Rank	26	86	45	114	27	87
Cumulative GPA	3.21	3.06	1.689	1.613	3.160	3.020

Participation in Probation Intervention

Students on academic probation are required to complete a four-step academic intervention program. Students must:

1. Complete a self-assessment
2. Complete an online seminar
3. Sign a probation contract
4. Meet with an academic advisor

Students who do not complete the intervention steps have a registration block placed on their account. As the table below demonstrates, this is a strong incentive for completing the intervention steps.

Participation in Probation Intervention

Signed Contract	86.70%
Self Assessment	93.90%
Online Seminar	86.30%
Advising Appointment	87.90%

In addition to the intervention steps, students on academic probation are strongly encouraged to participate in a voluntary program called Bounce Back. This program meets on a weekly basis for the duration of the probationary semester. Nearly 20% of first-year and 15% of transfer students on probation participated in Bounce Back.

Outcomes of Probation Semester